# WINTER CAMP FIRES.

KIRK MUNROE WRITES ABOUT OUTING DAYS IN FLORIDA.

**Florida Is as Big as All New England. It Is Well if You Camp There to Have a Boat—Some General Information of Interest.**

Correspondence of THE REPUBLICAN.

ST. AUGUSTINE, Dec. 20.—I write not of the winter camp fires of political organizations, or secret orders, or social clubs, held in the stifling atmosphere of lodges, halls or assembly rooms, but of the glorious open air fires of logs and crackling branches, sending up showers of golden sparks toward the star studded sky, and pervading all immediate surroundings with their cheery presence. Such as this is the fire in front of which the camper, sufficiently wearied with his day's work to appreciate the pleasure of relaxed muscles and absolute rest, throws himself on folded blanket with a sigh of perfect content. It is a fire suggestive of story and reminiscence. A fire that forms the nucleus of all the camp's life, and without which the scene would be dead and cheerless.

In summer such fires are seen everywhere. From Maine to Alaska, by river and lake, they dot our wilder landscapes like myriads of glowworms. But in the season of ice bound streams and snow drifted forests the places that knew them know them no more, and only sodden ashes remain to tell that they have been. Where, then, during these inclement months, shall they be relighted? Where may those of us who from choice, or at the command of some wise physician, would still sleep in the open, gather about our winter camp fires with the same comfort and satisfaction that attended those of August and September?

Carefully we scan the weather maps and their accompanying reports. Everywhere records of snow, ice, frost or bitter winds greet the eye as it glances down the printed page until we find ourselves among the twenties in parallels of latitude, and discover that but one little corner of the United States is left to us. We are half way down the Floridian peninsula, but here at last are all the things for which we have searched. Here are warmth, cloudless skies, game, fish, an infinity of navigable waters, and here are inexhaustible supplies of wood that may be had for the taking and burned without stint.

This, then, is a fitting place for the building of our winter camp fire, and having thus decided upon its location, let us touch a blaze to its lightwood knots and, tented by its fantastic shadows, discuss the questions of where to camp and how to camp in Florida, what to seek and what to avoid.

Florida is a big state, being the largest east of the Mississippi. It is as big as all New England. It is 400 miles long from north to south, and has nearly a thousand miles of coast washed by the Gulf of Mexico on the west and the Atlantic ocean on the east. For boating of all kinds, from yachting to canoeing, it offers opportunities and facilities unsurpassed elsewhere. For this reason and because it is a poor country for walking, and a worse one for riding, the best of Florida camping is always done in connection with a boat, preferably a small one.

If the camper's time be limited to a few weeks or months, or even a single season, the question of where he shall go to employ it to greatest advantage is somewhat difficult to answer. There are so many places and all are so attractive. The first question is that of health; and if the would be camper is in the least subject to malarial influences, let him confine his wanderings to the coasts, without penetrating farther inland than he can float on tide water. Adherence to this plan will still leave him a vast range of territory for purposes of exploration; much more than can be covered in a single season. If he defies malaria and is bent on visiting the interior, he may still do so, almost with impunity, provided he is willing to yield implicit obedience to two very simple rules. First, always make camp and have a shelter of some kind erected before sunset. Retire to it as soon as darkness closes in and do not leave it until after sunrise. In other words, avoid exposure to the malaria laden dampness of the night air. The second rule is still more important. Never drink river, lake or pond water without first boiling it. Make it into tea or coffee if you will, and bottle it for use on the following day; but at any rate boil it.

Of the innumerable fresh water cruises to be undertaken in Florida the most interesting is to be made from Kissimmee City, which is very near the geographical center of the state and is reached by rail. There launch your boat on Lake Tahopekilaga, cross it, enter the Kissimmee river and follow its tortuous windings for a week or so until it leads you to the great Lake Okeechobee. Camp sites on the borders of this inland sea are few and far between, but there is one available sand spit about a mile to the left of the mouth of the Kissimmee. After spending such time as is agreeable here, skirt the northern and western shores of the lake until the drainage canal leading into the Caloosahatchie is reached. This can generally be accomplished in a single day. The Caloosahatchie flows with a swift current into the Gulf of Mexico—about a ninety mile run from Okeechobee. For this trip at least two weeks provisions should be secured at Kissimmee City. The stock may be replenished to a certain extent at Fort Bassenger, sixty miles (by river) north of Okeechobee, and at several places on the Caloosahatchie. Of these the largest and most important is Myers, a flourishing town twenty miles from the mouth of the river.

This is a good trip to make in December, January or February, during which months the weather is apt to be too cold for any enjoyable camping north of latitude 28 degs. No part of Florida is tropical, notwithstanding all statements to the contrary, and only its extreme southern point is entirely exempt from frosts. Ice forms in the northern counties of the state, and even in those portions suited to winter camping the nights are so cool that the heaviest of double blankets are a necessity, and warm clothing should by no means be left behind. Even the warmest of winter days in the far south is liable to be chilled by the fierce blasts of a "norther" before sundown. These "northers," sweeping down from the Texas plains and across the gulf, are felt so much more keenly on the west than on the east coast of Florida that this alone is sufficient to render the latter the preferred cruising ground for the winter camper.

For an east coast cruise the best point of departure is Titusville, on the Indian river, for the reason that this is the most southerly railway terminus on that side, and because boats of all kinds may be purchased or chartered there. In cruising down the superb landlocked lagoon of salt water known as Indian river the camper need not at any time lay in provisions for more than two or three days, so numerous are the points of supply along the hundred mile run from Titusville to Jupiter. At the latter place, if his boat be small enough, he may have it carried to Lake Worth over the little eight mile railway that has recently sprouted into existence in this out of the way corner, as though from some seed carried far from its parent stock and then carelessly dropped; or, if the cruiser has confidence in himself and his boat, he can run out of Jupiter inlet and skirt the beach for ten miles to Lake Worth inlet, inside of which he will find a twenty mile stretch of landlocked but navigable salt water bordered by fine private residences and luxuriant cocoanut groves.

If his boat is large enough, say thirty feet or more in length, and he is a good sailor, the adventurer, after laying in a good stock of provisions at Lake Worth, may make the outside run of eighty miles from there to Biscayne bay, the most glorious cruising and camping ground in all Florida. Although this run is generally dreaded by the inexperienced, it is not so perilous an undertaking after all. From beginning to end it can be made within a few yards of a gently shelving sand beach, on which a boat may be run in an emergency, almost without injury. Then too, between the lake and the bay, are two harbors in which any boat of moderate draft may outride a hurricane without straining her ground tackle. The first of these is Hillsboro inlet, thirty-five miles from Lake Worth, and the second is New River inlet, ten miles further on. They form the mouths of fresh water streams flowing out from the Everglades, and each is well worth a few days of exploration.

The wildest and most difficult trip to be undertaken by the winter cruisers along a Florida coast is from Punta Gorda to Cape Sable. The former is the most southerly railway terminus on the west side, and the latter, nearly 200 miles away, is at the extreme point of Florida mainland. Between them lies a bewildering maze of mangrove keys, reefs, bars, inlets, bays, creeks and sounds teeming with game and fish. It is a trackless and almost uninhabited wilderness, in which provisions are not to be had for love or money, and fresh water ranks high among the luxuries. It is a mighty interesting country all the same, and will amply reward the winter voyager who has the courage to light his camp fire amid its mysteries. KIRK MUNROE.

## THE TETTIX.

Dewy and fragrant was the twilight falling
Upon the wide sweep of the Argive plain,
But, from the oleander copses calling,
No night bird voiced its immemorial pain.

Yet, clear and sweet, harmonious and winning—
Bar intermingling with melodious bar—
The tireless tettix with its violining
Filled all the sundown silence near and far.

And we, who loved the blithe note of the cricket
Beside the hearth when autumn days were bleak,
Hearing this homelike sound from mead and thicket,
Felt in our hearts a kinship for the Greek.
—Clinton Scollard in Lippincott's.

### Glad He Had Been Bluffed.

It's essentially a story of Chicago.

A rather shabby looking man walked into the office and took a chair beside the big desk.

"I'm a little hard up," he said, "and if you could let me have $100 for a short time I think it would tide me over."

The man behind the desk looked at his caller and became reminiscent.

"Why, I haven't seen you for years," he said. "Let me see! You used to call down at my farm in the old days when I was located near Forty-first street."

"Yes," said the caller; "I drove down there one day with a party of friends and filled up with some of your cherry brandy."

"I remember it perfectly," said the man behind the desk. "After you had taken a little of it you wanted to buy the farm."

"And you wanted $2,000 for it," said the caller.

"And you agreed to take it," added the man behind the desk.

"I did," admitted the caller, "and you came to my office the next day."

"Yes, and you swore you wouldn't take it as a gift."

"And you declared you had witnesses to my agreement to buy."

"But you bluffed me off."

"I did," admitted the caller.

"Well," said the man behind the desk, "I don't mind paying you $200 for bluffing me off. The farm has made me rich."—Chicago Tribune.

### Men Who Wear Small Hats.

I never saw an earnest worker, or a man who had real and serious duties to perform, who wore a hat too small for him.

Many great lawyers and statesmen, cranky but shrewd speculators, popular preachers, and history making generals and editors wear hats too large for them—sometimes so large that they act as extinguishers and are stopped in their downward course only by the projection of the ears; but I never saw one who wore a hat too small, perched upon the top of his head. Indeed, I might assert as a positive and invariable fact that, save in cases of dire necessity, such as shipwrecks or utter and hopeless poverty, the man who wears a hat too small for him is a silly, frivolous, conceited creature, with no serious ideas on any subject, and only the most flippant and shallow views of life and its obligations. Even among tramps and vagabonds, the fellow with the "dinky" derby balanced upon his mop of unkempt hair, is the most hopeless wreck among his class; while there is always a gleam of intelligence, a spark of hope, in the tramp whose hat is too large for him.—Kate Field's Washington.

### Never Heard of Him.

Telegraphers' stories are unique sometimes, and they do not hesitate to tell them to one another. It is said that the operators in New Haven, having always lived there, seldom hear of anything beyond the limits of the city and their operating rooms. The fact was illustrated recently when an operator in New York remarked to the man he was working with in New Haven that Parnell had just died.

"Who?" was the inquiry.

"Parnell," was the reply.

After a short interval, during which, it is supposed, the New Haven operator was in conference with somebody, this message was sent: "If you mean P. T. Barnum, we heard that long ago, but no one knows who Parnell is."—Telegraph Age.

## KNOCKING OUT A JEHU.

**Resentment of the Insults of a Big Stage Driver by a Little Dude.**

Colonel William Greene Sterrett, of the Galveston-Dallas News, tells this story:

"Once, a good many years ago," he said, "I was traveling in a stage in western Texas. It was long before the snort of the locomotive was heard on the prairies of that region, over which the buffalo yet roamed. At one of the stations a young Englishman and his wife got in. He was a little fellow and dressed as a typical Englishman—what we now call a dude. The driver was a big, raw boned six footer. He was a noted fighter. He had never been whipped and was a regular terror. He seemed to take a dislike to the little Englishman from the start. Presently he stopped the stage, got down, came back and threw open the door.

"'Here,' he said to the Englishman, 'you come out of that and get up on the seat with me. There ain't room for you in there.' The Englishman didn't move. 'Come out, I tell you,' roared the driver. The Englishman just sat still. 'If you don't come out, I'll haul you out by the legs,' shouted the Jehu. Then the rest of us expostulated with the driver. I was too tired to fight and couldn't get at my gun, so I just expostulated along with the rest. We told the driver there was plenty of room inside; that the Englishman was not crowding us, and that if he (the driver) insulted or injured any of his passengers he would be discharged by the stage company. The driver by this time was wild. He swore he was in command of that stage and that he proposed to run it to suit himself, and if that blankety blank cuss didn't come out he'd pull him out.

"'All right,' said the Englishman, at last. 'I will come out, and when I am out I will whip you soundly.'

"He got out slowly. We all felt sorry for him and sorrier for his wife. She didn't seem scared or worried, though, and all she said was:

"'Charley, don't let him scratch your face.'

"Well, when the little Englishman got out he took his coat off and handed it back into the stage. Then he started toward the driver and the driver started toward him. We heard a sound a good deal like that made by hitting a steer in the head with an ax. Down in a heap went the driver. He was up as quick as a flash. Down he went again. Actually that little English dude knocked that burly six foot driver clean off his feet a dozen times. How it was done none of us could tell. The big fellow would rush at the little 'un with his arms going like flails. Suddenly the little fellow would make a dash, his right arm would fly out, and down would go the driver. After the dozenth round that driver called out:

"'Hold on, stranger—hold on! I'm whipped and throw up my hands. You kin ride anywhere on this stage you darn please, outside or inside or on the hosses. You're the boss now; but,' he added, glaring savagely at the rest of us, 'I kin lick anybody else on this stage.'

"We didn't expostulate. The Englishman climbed back into the stage as quickly as he got off. His wife was satisfied, for 'Charley's' face wasn't even scratched. At the next station the driver explained that if he'd only have got hold of the little fellow he'd have hugged him to death like a bear; 'but,' he exclaimed, 'every time just as I was about to lay hands on him the ground 'd fly up and hit me on the back of the head.'

"Who was the little fellow? Oh, a graduate of Cambridge, and the best boxer of his time at the university."—Washington Post.

### Blunders of the Teachers.

A friend, himself for many years a teacher, writes: "The blunders of teachers of English literature are sometimes more amazing than any that are told of their pupils. I heard the other day of a woman at the west who, when a class was reading Tennyson's 'Day Dream,' explained to them that the happy princess, in following her lover 'deep into the dying day,' went to America! The laureate would be tickled to know of this. A year or more ago there was a discussion in a leading educational journal as to the persons meant in Longfellow's lines 'To the River Charles,' where he says:

"More than this—thy name reminds me
Of three friends, all true and tried, etc.

"One writer suggested that they were Professor Cornelius C. Fulton, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Charles Sumner. Another thought that Louis Agassiz's name should stand in the place of Hawthorne's, and this was finally accepted by all concerned. Neither the editor nor any of his correspondents or readers appeared to see the absurdity of making the name of the river suggest friends whose names were other than Charles."



Fully 85 per cent. of artificial limbs made are legs, 15 per cent. arms. Of legs, 49 per cent. are right, 46 per cent. left, 5 per cent. both right and left. Seventy-eight per cent. of legs amputated are of males, 22 per cent. are females.

**The Antiquity of the Christmas Box.**

Three centuries ago the Christmas box, now not often heard of, was in the height of its glory, as these lines show:

Gladly the Boy with Christmas Box in hand,
Throughout the town his devious route pursues.

The largest building that ever was erected was the machine gallery at the Paris exhibition, which was exactly a quarter of a mile in length, with a span of 360 feet.

Pope never could compose well without first declaiming for some time at the top of his voice, and thus rousing his nervous system to its fullest activity.

**The Book Trust Knocked Out.**

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